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TAGS: OPRC KMDR TU PREL KPAO
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FRIDAY, JULY 17, 2009

In Today's Papers

Palestinian President Abbas Visits Ankara to Explain Cyprus Comments

Media note Abbas is visiting Ankara about a week after reports surfaced indicating Abbas had given his support to the Greek Cypriots regarding the conflict over the divided island. Mainstream Sabah reports, "Abbas Comes Under the Shadow of Cyprus," and the paper notes, "Palestinian Leader Abbas came to Turkey yesterday," and "During his contacts in Ankara, he will be asked about reports that he gave support to the Greek Cypriots." CNN Turk also reports, "On the agenda during Abbas' meetings with President Gul and PM Erdogan will be an explanation regarding claims Abbas gave support to the Greek Cypriot side," regarding the divided island during his recent visit to Cyprus.

Azerbaijan, Not Turkey, To Act as The Mediator Between Israel-Syria (Aksam)

Mainstream Aksam reports that in a visit to Azerbaijan last month, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu asked Azerbaijan's President Aliyev to act as the go-between in indirect talks between Israel and Syria. Aksam comments Netanyahu's request was an Israeli response to Prime Minister Erdogan's outburst against President Shimon Peres in Davos, and expects the request will "harm" Turkey's role as mediator in the region. Aliyev has responded positively, and from now on, future meetings will be held in Baku, according to Aksam.

In another story, papers report the Israeli Ambassador in Ankara, Gabby Levy, said during a meeting with DSP leader Masum Turker that he expects the number of Israeli tourists visiting Turkey to "go down drastically" this year. Mainstream Milliyet says this year Israeli tourists would prefer Greece and Cyprus instead of Turkey following the Erdogan-Peres quarrel at Davos.

Morningstar: "The U.S. Wants Turkey to Play an Important Role in the Region"
Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports from Washington that Richard Morningstar, the U.S. Special Envoy for Eurasian Energy, told Washington's Brookings Institute during a conference entitled, "Turkey, Russia and Regional Energy Strategies" that the Nabucco Pipeline Project was not the only option in the East-West Energy

Corridor, adding the U.S. supported a "new corridor" in the south to carry Caspian gas to Europe. "We want Turkey to play an important role in this region," emphasized Morningstar. He underlined that American energy policies toward the region are "not anti-Russian." He also said the U.S. was against Iran's involvement in the project, but that supported gas contributions from Azerbaijan, Turkmeistan and Iraq. Morningstar also said the U.S. will not provide financial support to the project since it does not 'utilize' it.

Islamist-oriented Zaman reports Morningstar said the signing of the Nabucco deal "will make the EU open energy talks with Turkey." Morningstar hailed the offer of Iraqi PM al-Maliki to supply gas for Nabucco. He said that Baghdad and the Iraqi Kurds had to work out an agreement for the possible shipment of gas from northern Iraq to Turkey. Morningstar said the U.S. believes Iran "should be kept out of Nabucco for the time being," stressing Tehran "needs to agree to work to resolve the dispute over its controversial nuclear program."

Morningstar declined comment on Russia's involvement in the Nabucco project, but added the Nabucco Project was "not anti-Russian," reports Zaman.

Editorial Commentary on the Nabucco Project

Ferai Tinc wrote in mainstream Hurriyet: "The Nabucco project directly seeks to break up the Russian monopoly over the European natural gas market. For this reason, competition in the energy sector has risen. Along with the economic benefits, Nabucco also has good potential for fostering positive political outcomes in the region, including the reinforcement of the independence of former Soviet Union countries and their chance to open themselves up to

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international markets."

Gercekler: "I Didn't Interfere In The Judiciary"

Media outlets report that in response to criticism that came from Deputy Prime Minister Cemil Cicek, the Court of Appeals (Yargitay) Chairman Hasan Gercekler said he was "defending what he believed was right" when he announced that the bill for the trial of soldiers by civilian courts was "against the Constitution." Gercekler said he did "not interfere in the judiciary."

YOK Member Resigns In An 'Imam-Hatip' Protest (Cumhuriyet)
Leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet reports Turkey's Higher Education Council (YOK) board member Professor Bulent Serim has resigned after YOK head Professor Yusuf Ziya Ozcan announced that the system of using a lower coefficient to calculate the university admission examination scores of the graduates of religious high schools (Imam-Hatip) would end. Serim said he resigned as he did not want to become a part of the "Islamist game that is being staged."

Chechens Lose a Defender Of Human Rights (Taraif)

Media focus their international coverage on the news of the murder of prominent human rights activist and journalist Natalya Estemirova. Mainstream Hurriyet reports in "Who Killed Natalya?" that in the "Shocking Murder of A Chechen Journalist," "The number-one suspect in her murder is Chechen President Kadirov," and the paper carries a photo next to the article of Kadirov holding a gun. Liberal Radikal headlines, "Medvedev Is Backing Estemirova!" and the article notes, "The world was rocked by the news yesterday of the death of human rights activist and journalist Estemirova," and "In a first, Medvedev came out in support of her even though he has angrily denounced her," in the past. Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports, "One of Russia's most important human rights activists was killed," and "Claims have emerged that Chechen Leader Ramazan Kadirov gave the order," for her execution. In "A Russian Human Rights Activist Is Killed," mainstream NTV notes, "She was researching human rights violations in Chechnya" when she was kidnapped and later killed.

Iceland Speeds to EU Membership

Media pay attention to Iceland's seemingly quick and easy road to EU membership, despite the country's financial collapse last year. Mainstream Hurriyet headlines, "Iceland Quickly Will Become an EU Member," and the paper notes, "Last year the country came to the point of bankruptcy and today the country's application to the EU is

being approved." Mainstream NTV also reports, "Iceland was rocked by the economic crisis, but will now be an EU member." Mainstream CNN Turk reports, "The public in Iceland urged that the country join the EU after the country's banking system collapsed last year due to the economic crisis."

Editorials on Secretary Clinton's CFR Speech; Afghanistan; Uighur Turks

Murat Yetkin writes in liberal Radikal: "Secretary Clinton's CFR speech underlines that the U.S. counts Turkey as among the countries with whom to cooperate on important global matters. Her speech also indicates that U.S. foreign policy, from now on, will take into consideration the views of private institutions and opinion leaders in addition to the views of other governments."

Mehmet Yilmaz wrote in Islamist-oriented Zaman: "The current picture in Afghanistan is a demonstration of serious instability caused by the U.S. occupation. The occupation has tried to eliminate threats from the Taliban and Al Qaeda, but in the end both Pakistan and Afghanistan have been dragged into instability. American forces hoped to provide a stable atmosphere by using force and sometimes even massacring civilians. The U.S. should think about other ways to change this picture positively on the eve of Afghan presidential elections. However, President Obama is still considering sending additional troops in Afghanistan in order to solve the problem, which shows the U.S. has not learned any lessons from its mistakes

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in Afghanistan."

Sami Kohen wrote in mainstream Milliyet: "Even disputes over the name of the region demonstrate the depth of the dispute between the ethnic Uighurs and the Chinese. The Uighurs call the region 'East Turkistan' while China calls it 'Xinjiang Autonomous Region.' Uighurs are trying to preserve their culture and ethnic identity and despite their so-called autonomous status, the region has been subjected to China's assimilation policies. At the end of the day however the Uighurs face a dilemma. Their ultimate goal is independence, but realizing that goal is very unlikely. Instead, the Uighurs should focus on demanding their rights to autonomy in a peaceful and nonviolent way."

TV News (CNN Turk)

Domestic

- President Gul will attend Friday prayers, and will join the funeral of Colonel Faruk Sungur, the commander of the Turkish Task Force in Afghanistan, at Ankara's Kocatepe Mosque. Sungur was killed this week in a road accident in northern Afghanistan.
- 'Torrential rains' have killed six people in the Black Sea region.

- The Turkish Parliament will pick its new speaker August 4.

- Caroline Atkinson, IMF director of external relations, said talks continued with Turkey for a new stand-by deal.

World

- Two Israeli warships sail through the Suez Canal within the cruise-missile range of Iran.

- Addressing the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) in Washington, Secretary Clinton has identified Turkey as a major emerging global power along with Russia, China and India, with whom the U.S. wants to build a partnership to address the global challenges such as climate change, terrorism, recession and non-proliferation.

- Greek Cypriot government spokesman Stefanos Stefanou says the stance of Turkey as well as several other factors have to "change" in order to reach a settlement in Cyprus by the end of the year.

- Gulamriza Agazade, the head of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization,

the body in charge of the country's controversial nuclear program,
has resigned after 12 years in the post.

JEFFREY